B. AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 13, line 10 and continuing through page 14, line 25 as follows:

Figure 2 shows a block diagram of a packet traveling between a client computer system and a server computer system through various routers. In the example shown, three routers (router **220**, router **240**, and router **260**) are used to route packet **210** between client computer system **200** and server computer system **280**. Packet **210** includes a header area and a data area. The header area indicates the source and destination addresses for the packet and any prioritization information. The data area of packet **210** includes the content being transmitted between the client and the server. The content may be a request (i.e., from the client to the server) or a response to a request (i.e., from the server to the client). Each router includes a queue identifying packets that have been received and that are waiting to be forwarded in order to reach their ultimate destination. Router **220** includes queue **230**, router **240** includes queue **250**, and router **260** includes queue **270**. At each of the routers, packet **210** is added to the corresponding router queue. Each router includes a queue handling routine to process items in its queue. To provide prioritized service, the queue handling routine in each router reads the header portion of each packet to identify high priority packets. If a high priority packet is identified, logic within the queue handling routine is invoked to provide priority service to the identified packet. One priority service that the queue handling routine can provide regards packet dropping. When a queue becomes too busy and the memory allocated for the router's queue becomes full, some packets need to be dropped from the queue. When a packet is

dropped, either client **200** or server **280** determines that a packet is missing and requests the other device to retransmit the missing packet. Consequently, retransmission of packets causes an ~~increased~~ increase in the overall transmission time needed to transmit the packet. The queue manager routine can avoid dropping high priority packets and, instead, drop lower priority packets waiting on the queue. Another way the queue manager routine can increase the throughput of high priority packets is by reordering the queue to put high priority packets toward the top of the queue. One type of reordering routine uses the amount of time a packet has waited on the queue and the packet's priority to determine a queue order. Those packets who have waited longer and those packets with higher priorities are thus moved toward the top of the queue, while packets that have newly entered the queue and packets with lower priorities are moved towards the end of the queue.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 21, line 5 and continuing through page 22, line 12 as follows:

One of the things that the client may decide to do in response to receiving pricing information **790** is request a service level change to increase the priority of packets sent and received by client computer **780**. In order receive higher priority service, client computer **780** sends service level change request **795** through computer network **775** to network pricing server **700**. Network pricing server **700** receives service change request **740** from computer network **775**. Billing engine software **745** processes service change request **740**. In one embodiment, price information returned in price information **790** is packaged

with service change request **740** and used for billing information. In another embodiment (or if the pricing information is not included), billing engine **745** retrieves pricing data from pricing data store **735**. A record is written to billing records data store **750** identifying the client and recording the pricing in effect during the upgraded service period and the timestamp when the upgrade service request was received and processed. Packets with the client as either the destination (recipient) or target (sender) are marked with priority heading information so that they travel in a prioritized fashion through network **775**. When the client no longer wishes to use and pay for prioritized service, another service level change request **795** is sent by client through network **775** and received by network pricing server **700** as service change request **740**, this time informing network pricing server **700** to stop the prioritized service. Billing engine **745** responds by writing data to billing records data store **750** recording the timestamp at which the client stopped using the prioritized service and by resetting the priority heading information so that the client's packets travel in a non-prioritized (normal) fashion through network **775**.[[.]] At the end of a billing cycle, billing records **750** are processed to calculate client bills including the amount owed for prioritized service during the billing period. This calculation is made by multiplying the pricing applicable to the client's service upgrade requests by the amount of time the client used the corresponding service upgrades.